

PUBLIC HEARING
PLANNING BOARD AND
YEAR 32 CDBG PROGRAM APPLICANTS
JANUARY 17, 2006

In attendance:

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS

Paula Caron, Vice Chair	
Mike Hurley	Yvette Cooks
Jay Cruz	John DiPasquale
Paul Fontaine, Jr.	Linda Nicholopolous

PLANNING OFFICE STAFF

David Streb	Larry Casassa
Mary McCaffrey	Mike O'Hara

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ted DeSalvatore	Stephen DiNatale
Jody Joseph	Annie DeMartino
Norman Boisvert	Stephan Hay

Paula Caron opened the public hearing at 6:30P.M. Paula explained that the purpose of the meeting was to give applicants an opportunity to discuss their Yr.32 proposals. This year thirty-two CDBG proposals were submitted totaling \$2.7 million dollars in requests. It is estimated that approximately \$1.3 million dollars will become available.

Larry Casassa, Deputy Planning Coordinator, explained to the audience that eligible CDBG activities must meet one of three national objectives. They are: (1) benefit low and moderate income persons; (2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; or (3) meet community development needs having a particular urgency. Seventy cents on every dollar must meet the low-moderate income standards. Tonight's public hearing is part of this year's Citizen Participation process. The Office of the Planning Coordinator will continue to accept written or verbal comments about community needs throughout this process.

SUMMARY OF YEAR 32 PROPOSALS
AND PAGE INDEX

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT

SPONSOR

YR. 32 REQUEST

YR. 31 AWARD

		<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	
	<u>PAGE</u>			
<u>Putnam Place Wheelchair Lift</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator</u>	<u>\$95,000.00</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>1</u>

Summary: Project funds will be used to remove the old outside lift and install a new one. The new lift will provide easier entrance into city hall and it will comply with all ADA accessibility requirements.

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing lift. A new lift will be able to accommodate all types of accessibility vehicles, including wheelchairs, scooters, etc. As it is, the city is liable for current ADA violations. The current lift doesn't always work properly, which was the experience of one of tonight's participants.

<u>TOTAL ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL (1)</u>	<u>\$95,000.00</u>
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PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
<u>Memorial School</u> <u>none</u>	<u>Fitchburg School Dept.</u> <u>4</u>	<u>\$132,000</u>	
<u>Auditorium Renovation Project</u>			

Summary: Project funds will be used to remove and dispose of existing chairs and install 800 new chairs at \$165.00 each. Sight lines will be improved and ADA requirements will be met.

The purpose of this project is to replace existing chairs in the auditorium. There have been no renovations to the chairs since the auditorium was built in 1967. School staff report that the ceiling leaks are being taken care of. The new seats will be anchored and the stage has already been repaired. The auditorium could be used for non-school venues.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
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<u>Fitchburg Senior Center Main Hall Project</u>	<u>Fitchburg Senior Center</u>	<u>\$12,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>PAGE</u> <u>2</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to repair the roof of the Main Hall, which is leaking and causing damage to the ceiling and walls. Slate will be replaced where appropriate. Work shall be done in accordance with historic preservation guidelines.

The purpose of this project is to replace the slate roof with similar materials. The roof is leaking over the Main Hall, which was recently painted and new lighting fixtures were installed. If this project is recommended for funding, it will mostly likely be at an amount higher than the requested amount in order to cover prevailing wage rates.

<u>Park/Playground Improvements</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator</u>	<u>\$385,000</u>	<u>\$300,000</u>	<u>14</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to install BMX equipment at Parkhill Park, finish the lighting project at Joubert Skatepark, install new fencing at Nikitas Field, design new softball field at Goodrich Playground, and begin renovations at Howarth Park, including upgrades to the basketball court, softball field and Amphitheatre.

The purpose of this project is consistent with the City's Park and Playground Action Plan. The Parks Board determined that approximately \$80,000 is needed for the BMX project at Parkhill Park. \$30,000 is needed to finish the lighting improvements at the Joubert Skatepark. Last year's budget covered the cost of conduits at the Joubert Skatepark. The city is responsible for the cost of lighting at the park. \$205,000 is needed at Howarth Park for the renovations to the basketball court, softball field and the Ampitheatre. \$20,000 is needed for design costs to make improvements to the Goodrich Softball Field. \$50,000 is needed to install new fencing at Nikitas Field.

<u>Streetscape Improvements</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator</u>	<u>\$235,000 18</u>	<u>\$43,000</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to replace approximately 2,350 linear feet of deteriorated sidewalk, completing work previously funded along River and Westminster Street. Improvements will comply with ADA standards.

The purpose of this project is consistent with the City's Streetscape Action Plan and is determined to be a priority. The proposed improvements will connect two sections of sidewalk that have been recently repaired by the Department of Public Works.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
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PAGE

<u>Downtown Sidewalk and Street Tree Improvements</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>22</u>
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Summary: Project funds will reduce blight in Fitchburg's central business district by addressing heaved sidewalk areas, replacing aged or diseased trees, reseating grate frames, or replacing empty tree pits with appropriate materials.

The purpose of this project is consistent with the city's downtown revitalization efforts. The condition of downtown sidewalks is poor and are a safety hazard to pedestrians.

<u>Green Acres</u> <u>Village Security</u> <u>Improvements</u>	<u>Fitchburg Housing</u> <u>Authority</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>25</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to install approximately 1,100 linear feet of industrial grade, chain link fence (six feet high) from Leyte Road to Normandy Road. The fence will close off easy access to Green Acres Village from a wooded area where drug related activities have taken place by non-residents of the housing complex.

The purpose of this project is to provide safety for the residents in the Meadowbrook housing complex, particularly for young mothers. Non-residents use the wooded area adjacent to the housing complex to conduct illegal activities. The housing authority has been working with law enforcement on this issue. A fence will make access to the property more difficult, thus deterring crime.

<u>Crocker Field</u> <u>Roof Repair</u>	<u>Crocker Field</u> <u>Restoration Committee</u>	<u>\$67,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>29</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to remove the existing covered grandstand roof, repair roof beams, install a new roof, and pay for design costs.

The purpose of this project is to continue making all of the improvements needed at the field, including roof repair of the grandstand. The School Department previously received CDBG funds to repair the concrete and iron fence, with the condition that the school department would provide matching funds. The project was put out to bid, but the bids were over budget. It will be put out to bid again. A Restoration Committee representative said that they would be able to make roof repairs if they did not receive the full amount of the CDBG request.

<u>TOTAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND</u> <u>IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSALS (7)</u> <u>PROJECT</u>	<u>\$961,000.00</u>
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PUBLIC SERVICES

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>PROJECT SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST</u> <u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD</u>
<u>AMOUNT</u>			

<u>School Violence Prevention Program</u>	<u>Battered Women's Resources, Inc.</u>	<u>\$28,500</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>34</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used for a Community Education Coordinator position. Services will include presentations in eligible Fitchburg public schools on violence prevention. Dating violence brochures will be reproduced for distribution. Approximately 5,000 Fitchburg public schools students will be served.

The purpose of this project is to hire a full-time coordinator. The position was previously part-time and it was difficult to fill. A series of trainings will be offered to eligible schools within the system. The trainings will be a resource for the schools to address the issue of bullying. The education of parents will be included in the curriculum.

<u>Drug Suppression And Strategic Foot Patrol</u>	<u>Fitchburg Police Department</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>	<u>\$80,000</u>	<u>50</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to provide for overtime expenses related to drug investigations in CDBG eligible areas, and implement strategic foot patrols to reduce street crime and increase citizen safety.

The purpose of this project is to provide for overtime in the drug unit. There is one less person in the drug unit, which will increase the need for overtime. Surveillance is conducted by vehicles and foot patrol in CDBG eligible areas. The drug unit works collaboratively with other law enforcement agencies, including the Worcester County Task Force and the D.E.A.

<u>On-site Nursing Services</u>	<u>Montachusett Home Care Corp., Inc.</u>	<u>\$34,645</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>53</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to pay a portion of the cost for nursing services for residents at Wallace Towers, Daniel Heights and Durkin Apartments in cooperation with the Fitchburg Housing Authority. A registered nurse will be available 20 hours a week covering all three sites. Approximately 307 people will be served.

The purpose of this project is to expand nursing services to other housing authority complexes. With the provision of nursing services on site, the need for hospitalization is reduced. MHCC will provide the remaining portion of the salary not funded by the CDBG Program.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
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<u>Information and Referral Service Program</u>	<u>United Neighbors of Cleghorn, Inc.</u>	<u>\$61,500</u>	<u>\$61,500</u>	<u>67</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to support staff salaries. Services include an expanded information

and referral program to the Fitchburg Latino population, GED preparation in English and Spanish, ESL classes, and youth programming for Cleghorn residents. Approximately 2,000 people will be served.

This project will provide information and referral services to the Latino community citywide. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Leominster Spanish Center and the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center to provide this service. It is estimated that there are 1,000 new clients receiving information and referral services. Other services run by the center will be geared towards neighborhood residents. Residents have begun their own newsletter.

<u>Family Promise</u>	<u>Montachusett</u>	<u>\$18,800</u>	<u>none</u>
			<u>86</u>

Mentoring Program **Interfaith Hospitality Network**

Summary: Project funds will be used to provide outreach mentoring support to families who have graduated from the shelter program. Activities include goal setting, problem solving and financial planning. Mentoring is provided to graduated families for approximately one year. It is estimated that 12-16 families will be served.

The purpose of this project is to provide a mentoring program for graduates of the shelter program. It has been determined that assistance with money management is needed in order to successfully maintain permanent housing.

<u>Youth Center</u>	<u>Boys & Girls Club</u>	<u>\$15,000</u>
<u>none</u>	<u>96</u>	
<u>In North Central MA.</u>		

Summary: Project will fund a Youth Activities Director to provide after school and summer vacation programming in education, recreation, character development, life skills, cultural arts and others. Approximately 250 Fitchburg youth, ages 8 through 18 will be served. The club is located at Fitchburg State College Parkinson Gymnasium.

The purpose of the program is to assist disadvantaged youth by providing a safe place to go after school and during the summer. Fitchburg youth participate in an after school homework program, and in recreational, science, and health programs. Staff also provide these programs off-site at Memorial Middle School, MOC Learning Center, and at the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center. Staff indicated that the enrollment is increasing. The club averages 75 participants a day.

Mus
Hmong-Lao

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
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PAGE

<u>Hmong-Lao</u>	<u>Montachusett</u>	<u>\$26,829.72</u>	<u>\$20,000</u>
<u>106</u>			
<u>Community</u>	<u>Opportunity Council, Inc.</u>		
<u>Outreach</u>			

Summary: Project will fund a Coordinator's salary to assist the Hmong-Laotian community with various information and referral services. The coordinator will work collaboratively with the Hmong Lao Foundation Board. Approximately 200 Fitchburg residents will be served at the 430 Main Street office.

The purpose of this program is to assist the Fitchburg Hmong community in collaboration with the Hmong Foundation. Staff have seen an increase in enrollment in their English As A Second Language classes. A newsletter is being developed. Fitchburg funds will help supplement funds received from the Leominster CDBG Program.

PROJECT

School Violence

Battered Women's

Housing

Massachusetts Fair

**Discrimination
Project**

Housing Center

Summary: Project will fund an Education and Outreach Coordinator to conduct 8 fair housing workshops and 3 landlord/housing provider trainings. Fair housing materials will be provided. An estimated 1,000 Fitchburg households will be served by the project.

The purpose of this project is to educate consumers and landlords about housing discrimination issues as a means of prevention. HUD provides funding to this agency, and other cities provide CDBG funding. Fitchburg CDBG Funds would be used for Fitchburg trainings only.

**For Your
Health Project**

**Multi-Service
Center, Inc.**

\$18,000

none

120

Summary: Project funds will provide staffing for health screenings and health education programs to uninsured and under insured Fitchburg residents in elderly housing, Golden Age Club, Fitchburg Senior Center, schools, etc. Approximately 75 Fitchburg residents will be served.

The purpose of this project is to provide health screenings to primarily low-moderate income persons. Screenings will be for glucose, cholesterol, diabetes, etc. on a regular basis to Fitchburg residents. Staff reported that this project is currently funded.

PROJECT

SPONSOR

**YR. 32 REQUEST
AMOUNT**

**YR. 31 AWARD
AMOUNT**

PAGE

**Information &
Referral Program**

**Fitchburg Spanish
Council, Inc.**

\$60,660

none

133

Summary: Project funds will provide staffing for outreach/translation/transportation services, in the areas of housing, education, crisis intervention, domestic violence, drug and alcohol intervention, legal and health issues, and problem resolutions. Approximately 300 Fitchburg Latino residents will be served.

The purpose of this project is to provide comprehensive services to the Fitchburg Latino population. Currently, the budget allows for specific services only, for instance, services to elders or DMR clients only. Board members report that the agency has to turn people away due to lack of funding.

TOTAL PUBLIC SERVICE PROPOSALS (10)

\$373,934.72

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>Micro-Enterprise Business Assistance Program</u>	<u>Twin Cities Community Development Corporation</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>141</u>

Summary: Project will fund outreach activities and technical assistance to small businesses (usually less than 5 employees) and leverage micro-loan program (up to \$50,000) for low-moderate income individuals. An estimated 55 Fitchburg residents and 35 businesses will be served, 15 jobs will be created and/or retained, and 10 businesses will be developed.

The purpose of the project is to provide technical assistance to Fitchburg residents looking to expand their business or start up a business in Fitchburg. Recent efforts have been with unemployed Fitchburg residents.

<u>Downtown Coordinator</u>	<u>Councillor Jody Joseph and Matt Straight</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>	<u>\$30,000</u>	<u>168</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to provide assistance to downtown microenterprises to create and retain jobs, and fill available downtown space. It is estimated that 10 microenterprises will be assisted, 5 jobs retained, and 5 storefront vacancies filled.

The purpose of this project is to work with storeowners. This position helps leverage other monies and staff work closely with the Cultural Alliance.

TOTAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (2)
\$55,000.00

CLEARANCE ACTIVITIES

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
<u>PAGE</u>			
<u>Demolition</u>	<u>Demolition</u>	<u>Office of the</u>	<u>\$275,000</u>

Planning Coordinator

Summary: Project funds will be used to remove abandoned structures in CDBG target area, which pose an imminent threat to public safety and which contribute to slums and blight.

The purpose of this project is to help stabilize neighborhoods and pave the way for redevelopment. A municipal lien is placed on the property to recover the costs of demolition. This lien supersedes all other debt on the property.

TOTAL CLEARANCE ACTIVITIES PROPOSALS (1) **\$275,000.00**

REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
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PAGE

<u>Code Enforcement</u>	<u>Code Enforcement</u>	<u>Fitchburg Board</u>	<u>\$161,000</u>
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of Health

Summary: Project will fund staffing costs to comprehensively enforce the State Sanitary Code and improve neighborhood housing stock. Approximately 1,250 housing units in the CDBG strategy area.

The purpose of this project is to fund two inspector positions within the CDBG strategy area. The request to pay for two positions next year is a result of the current fiscal situation facing the City. With the exception of the current year, CDBG funds have previously been used to pay for two inspector positions.

<u>Code Enforcement</u>	<u>Fitchburg Fire Department</u>	<u>\$18,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>179</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to pay for overtime expenses related to fire code inspections in the CDBG strategy area. The project will allow for additional inspections required by state law.

The purpose of this project is to fund a part-time position (10hrs/week) in the Fire Bureau. Additional inspections are required as a result of new carbon monoxide and residential sprinkler requirements.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>
<u>PAGE</u>			

<u>Valiton Shelter Code Improvements</u>	<u>Fitchburg Fire Department</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>183</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to install a fire alarm system and a sprinkler system, install second exists on all floors being used as living space, and address any other fire and building code issues at the shelter.

The purpose of this project is to bring the building in compliance with fire codes by installing a fire alarm and a sprinkler system. The Fire Chief and Building Commissioner have determined the need for this equipment in order to keep the residents safe. If this activity is funded through the OPC Housing Program, the work must include lead abatement.

<u>Elder Home Repair Program</u>	<u>Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.</u>	<u>\$66,429</u>	<u>\$60,000</u>	<u>187</u>
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Summary: Project will fund program costs for home repairs and modifications to low income elderly Fitchburg households. Improvements include installation of handrails/grab bars, screen/window/door/floor repairs, minor roof repairs, and hot water tank replacement. Approximately 18 homes will be served.

The purpose of this project is to make accessibility and other minor repairs to single family homes of elderly Fitchburg residents who meet the income guidelines. These minor repairs will allow elders to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

<u>Home Ownership Opportunity Program</u>	<u>Twin Cities CDC</u>	<u>\$35,000</u>	<u>\$35,000</u>	<u>196</u>
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Summary: Project will administer existing HOOP first-time home buyer program which provides buyer counseling, technical assistance and post-purchase counseling. Approximately 75 housing units will be served.

The purpose of this project is to increase home ownership placing more of an emphasis on post purchase counseling and prevention of predatory lending. The CDC will target the “Weed and Seed” area, which is in the CDBG strategy area.

<u>Sign and Facade Improvement Program</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator & the Cultural Alliance</u>	<u>\$80,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>218</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to provide matching grants and loans for an estimated three façade projects and three signage projects to property owners in Fitchburg’s designated Slums and Blight area. Architectural costs are included.

The purpose of this program is to help store owners conform with design standards in the designated areas. Last year there were sufficient funds. However, new projects are anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year which necessitates the need for this request. The program has expanded beyond Main Street, to include sites within the designated Slums and Blight area.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>	
<u>PAGE</u>				
<u>Main Street Elevator Grant Program</u>	<u>Economic Development Office</u>	<u>\$120,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>221</u>

Summary: Project funds will provide matching grants to downtown property owners of residential and commercial spaces for the installation and/or renovation of elevators, so that they are in compliance with ADA standards. It is estimated that two property owners will be served by the project.

The purpose of this project is to promote downtown housing and commercial revitalization. It is a matching grant program. Among the benefits is a projected increase in municipal tax revenue.

<u>Main Street Housing Program</u>	<u>Economic Development Office</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>224</u>
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Summary: Project funds will be used to create new market rate housing in the upper floors of Main Street buildings. Direct financial assistance will be given to private investors up to \$5,000 per unit, an up to \$25,000 per project. It is estimated that 5-8 property owners will be assisted.

The purpose of this project is to help redevelop the downtown area, which will promote economic development. It will establish viable residential areas and put new properties on the tax roll.

TOTAL REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION PROPOSALS (8) **\$605,429.00**

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>	
<u>PAGE</u>				
<u>CDBG Administration and Planning</u>	<u>Office of the Planning Coordinator</u>	<u>\$300,000</u>	<u>\$289,000</u>	<u>227</u>

Summary: Project will provide for necessary administration of CDBG programs and sub-recipient contracts in accordance with federal guidelines, including staffing, technical services and planning activities. This also includes grant writing and administration of grant projects.

The purpose of this project is to administer the CDBG Program including all funded projects, carry out essential planning activities, and both apply for and administer other grant funds, with the use of CDBG as a leveraging tool.

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>YR. 32 REQUEST AMOUNT</u>	<u>YR. 31 AWARD AMOUNT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>Fitchburg Marketing Study</u>	<u>Economic Development Office</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>none</u>	<u>230</u>

Summary: Project funds will be used to assist the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority in creating a marketing plan to attract businesses to the downtown area.

The purpose of this project to market Fitchburg's business potential to successful developers from inside and outside of Fitchburg.

<u>Small Business</u>	<u>Fitchburg Parking</u>	<u>Economic Development</u>		
			<u>\$25,000</u>	
			<u>0</u>	
				<u>none</u>
				<u>233</u>
<u>Study</u>	<u>Office</u>			

Summary: Project funds will be used to hire a firm to update Fitchburg's Parking Plan, to study the need for additional parking in the downtown area, as part of an overall marketing strategy to bring businesses into Fitchburg.

The purpose of this project is to determine ways in which to attract developers to Fitchburg. With the rate of development going on in Fitchburg, it is presumed that more parking will be needed. It is understood that parking is a necessary offshoot of development.

TOTAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION PROPOSALS (3)

\$375,000.00

The Public Hearing closed at 9:45P.M.

Submitted by,
Mary McCaffrey
Community Development Administrator